

Aquatic Invasive Species Research Grants

Fiscal Years 2022–2023 Request for Proposals

Deadline for TPWD receipt of proposals: May 31, 2021

Texas Parks and Wildlife Department (TPWD) announces a Request for Proposals (RFP) for state fiscal years 2022–2023 under the Aquatic Invasive Species program. Research grants that span one or two years may be awarded. Awards will begin no earlier than September 1, 2021 with all grants terminating no later than the end of fiscal year 2023 (August 31, 2023). It is recommended that proposal budgets not exceed approximately \$50,000 per year; cost-effectiveness will be considered in proposal review to ensure best use of available funding. Approximately \$120,000 in funding per year total is expected to be available for this grant program, although funding may be augmented from other sources if available. Funds for this grant are administered by TPWD under Statewide Aquatic Vegetation and Invasive Species Management (state funds). For proposals that entail two years, the first year of research should be independent of year two and be capable of being completed by August 31, 2022, with a quantifiable end point in the event that funding does not become available for the second year. Prior to proposal submittal, it is suggested that investigators contact the TPWD Senior Scientist for Aquatic Invasive Species (monica.mcgarrrity@tpwd.texas.gov) or other TPWD biologist(s) with expertise in the study area to discuss and refine potential proposals.

Eligibility of Prospective Applicants

Applicants (Principal Investigator; PI) must demonstrate a proven track record of publications or previous work (e.g., unpublished project reports) in an applicable field. Please address this in your submission by providing a statement of qualifications to conduct the project and a curriculum vitae for each PI.

TPWD will only issue contracts to the following entities:

- Institutions of Higher Education, such as colleges or universities (private or public; see "Higher Education Coordinating Act of 1965" Sec. 61.003).
- Non-profit organizations [501 (c) (3)].
- Federal, State, Local (County, City) offices, (see "Professional Services Procurement Act" Sec. 2254.002).

It is imperative that your agency/institution possess knowledge of State of Texas purchasing rules and have the administrative expertise and infrastructure to be able to manage state contracts.

Project Funding Priorities

Proposal objectives should not duplicate previous research and the proposal must clearly demonstrate that this is a novel project that fills a research gap. Projects must adequately address one of the following priority research topics to be considered; whether a proposal addresses a top priority topic will be

considered in scoring proposals. It is recommended that projects also address a priority species and whether a top priority species is addressed will be considered in scoring proposals; however, proposals on other non-priority species will be considered.

Top Priority Topics:

- Enhancing management of aquatic invasive species, including pesticide effectiveness and targeted removals or novel control methods
- Ecology and population dynamics of problematic aquatic invasive species in Texas, with a focus on factors affecting invasion success or management implications
- Identification of geographic areas and/or habitats most at risk of invasion and impacts in Texas

Other Priority Topics:

- Limiting factors for growth and survival of problematic aquatic invasive species, with a focus on implications for invasions in Texas
- Human-mediated introduction of aquatic invasive species, including prevention strategies
- Ecological impacts of aquatic invasive species on native species and habitats in Texas
- Economic/socioeconomic impacts or other impacts on humans of aquatic invasive species in Texas
- Optimal strategies for biological control organism propagation and effective use
- Geographic distribution and dispersal of aquatic invasive species in Texas
- Effects of management of aquatic invasive species on native species and ecosystems in Texas

Top Priority Species:

- Zebra and Quagga Mussels (*Dreissena polymorpha* and *D. bugensis*)
- Giant Salvinia (*Salvinia molesta*)

Other Priority Species:

- Giant reed (*Arundo donax*)
- Saltcedar (*Tamarix* spp.)
- Tilapias (primarily *Oreochromis* spp.)
- Suckermouth catfishes (*Pterigoplichthys* and *Hypostomus* spp.)
- Applesnails (*Pomacea maculata*)
- Other problematic aquatic plants in Texas (e.g., water hyacinth, hydrilla, Eurasian watermilfoil)

Proposal Submission

The deadline for receipt of proposals is May 31, 2021. Each proposal package must contain the following items: (1) the Project Statement as described in the [Project Statement Guidelines](#), (2) a [Budget Spreadsheet](#), and (3) a statement of qualifications and curriculum vitae for each PI. Attachments should be emailed to Sarah.Haas@tpwd.texas.gov using Microsoft Word or PDF format, and Microsoft Excel or PDF for the Budget Spreadsheet. Please note that email attachments exceeding 35 MB need to be delivered in separate emails to overcome file size limitations and .zip files will be rejected by our email server.

When constructing the proposal package, please also adhere to the following in addition to the project statement guidelines and budget spreadsheet instructions:

Project timeline

Projects must be completed by August 31, 2023. Two-year projects must have a clearly defined endpoint for each year, as continued funding is contingent upon availability and performance. An anticipated timeline for completion of key tasks, including submission of biannual and final reports, must be included in the proposal (see Project Statement Guidelines).

Funding limits

It is recommended that proposal budgets not exceed approximately \$50,000 per year. Approximately \$120,000 in funding per year total is expected to be available for this grant program, although funding may be augmented from other sources if available.

Match requirements

- Cost-split is 75:25 (state share: applicant match). Therefore, of the Total Project Cost, at least 25% must be dedicated to Match (in-kind allowed).
- Volunteer labor provided as match must be reasonable and requires documentation of fair market value.
- Unrecovered indirect costs (Facilities and Administration; F&A) may be used as match. TPWD follows the current Colleges and Universities Rate Agreement for indirect cost; but see also indirect costs section below.

Indirect costs

Indirect costs are no longer capped at 15%, although this rate is recommended. TPWD has a statutory and fiduciary responsibility to maximize cost-effectiveness of grant dollars. One important measure of cost effectiveness is the quantity or quality of tangible products proposed to be generated from funded projects. Applicants may voluntarily reduce their reimbursable indirect (F&A) rates to dedicate more funds to their project goals. Unrecovered indirect costs may be used to meet match requirements.

Project Selection

Proposal evaluation is based upon: (1) scientific rigor (sampling effort, methodology, etc.); (2) how well it addresses the primary research topic; and (3) cost-effectiveness.

Approximate proposal review timeline

- **June 7, 2021:** TPWD distributes eligible proposals for review by a selection panel, to include TPWD staff and other funding partners, as applicable. Based on an objective and systematic review process the review panel generates a rank order list of proposals and meets to identify project(s) for funding.
- **August 2, 2021 (approximately):** TPWD notifies all applicants of review outcome. State contracts will not be generated for awardee(s) until after September 1, 2021 (i.e., beginning of fiscal year 2022) and will require a minimum of 30-45 days to execute; pre-award clause is

possible, with costs prior to contract execution incurred at the PI's risk. The successful applicant will be asked to sign an agreement (state contract) that specifies the project requirements, such as the cost share, honoring the objective and approach from the project statement provided by the applicant, and details regarding invoicing, reporting, deliverables, and other obligations.

Proposal submission contact information:

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